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FORCED RESETTLEMENT

BY

COLONEL WARREN GARLOCK
United States Army

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FORCED RESETTLEMENT
AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT
by

Colonel Warren Garlock
United States Army

Mr. James Trinnaman
Project Advisor

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ABSTRACT

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Forced resettlement is a counter-insurgency tactic designed to depopulate an area by relocating the people against their will, thus denying their support to the insurgent forces. This paper reviews four recent insurgencies which employed resettlement programs, how the governments carried out the programs, and if they were successful. A threatened government must consider several factors before implementing this extremely harsh, complex and expensive strategy, particularly because of its negative effect on innocent people at a time when the government seeks their support. Forced resettlement is a viable counter-insurgency tactic; but due to its high risk, it should only be employed after less risky and simple options have been attempted.

INTRODUCTION

Low intensity conflict (LIC) is the most common form of warfare; it always has been and will continue to be in the future. Currently there are 36 Third World countries involved in unconventional situations that are threatening their internal security or even the stability of the government.¹ Throughout the history of the United States we have been involved in various forms of LIC. Even within our borders, many consider our relations with the American Indians as a LIC. However, since World War II our involvement has increased dramatically. The range and scope of our involvement have encompassed the entire spectrum of conflict from a mere show of force or diplomatic negotiation to almost total commitment of our armed forces.

U.S. military operations in LIC fall into four broad categories: support for insurgency and counter-insurgency; combatting terrorism, peacekeeping operations; and peacetime contingency operations. This paper will only address the first category, insurgency and counter-insurgency operations. This subject alone is vastly complex, and entire books have been written just on certain aspects of insurgency. However, there are a few fundamental principles that are common to all insurgencies; and it is one of these principles I will address--population control, and more specifically, forced resettlement. Basically an insurgency is a struggle for control or support of the people. Both sides want and need their support. The part-time insurgent (the simple farmer who tills his fields by day and

is an armed guerrilla by night) is a myth. In order for an insurgency to progress beyond the organizational stage, it requires fulltime and committed personnel for the military arm of the insurgent organization.

Counter-insurgency operations involve a wide spectrum of operations. The most common is military, but they also include intelligence, psychological, economic, political and several others. They all focus on people, gaining their support or trying to deny their support to the insurgents. On the other hand, the insurgents use the same type of operations to sway the population to their way of thinking and to gain their active support. Neither side can survive without the support of the general population. Since that is true, then separating the people from one side or the other will assure victory. There are many examples throughout history where invading armies forceably removed a population from an area to deny the opposing army its support. However, these were general wars, not insurrections. Napoleon did resort to forced resettlement after his conquest of Spain. Guerrillas were threatening his rear area, so Napoleon forcibly resettled tens of thousands of people in an effort to separate the guerrillas from their support. Depopulating an area to gain an advantage or reduce a threat is a tactic that invading armies have used many times throughout history.

Is a resettlement operation an applicable tactic today? Under what circumstances could it be used, and is it morally correct and legally permissible? If a government does decide to forceably resettle a segment of its population, what principles

should go into the planning and then how should the program be carried out? To answer these questions I will briefly review four major insurgencies that have occurred since World War II. All of them used resettlement programs with varying degrees of success. I will examine the environment under which the insurgency took place and how the resettlement programs were planned and carried out. The four insurgencies I will review are Greece, Algeria, Malaya and Vietnam. The United States was directly involved in Greece and, of course, Vietnam.

Greece

The insurgency flared up in Greece almost immediately after World War II. However, there had been minor guerrilla activity in the country prior to the war, but these were composed of several factions, and it was not a cohesive effort. Immediately after the war Communist movements were sweeping across Eastern Europe. This spread into Greece because the Communist theme, i.e., land and economic reform, appealed to the poor living in the hills and ultimately this is where the insurgency had its greatest support.

In late 1946 the Greek people voted by over 70% to return the royalist party to power, and the king returned a month later to assume power. The insurgents numbered only 2,500 in March, 1946, but their numbers grew rapidly so that by April, 1947, there were 14,300, and 18,000 by November. It began to level off there, and throughout the remainder of the war they averaged between 20,000-23,000.² The insurgents remained confined to the

hill country along the Yugoslavian and Bulgarian borders, and the majority of their outside support initially came from these two countries. Both countries provided secure areas in which the guerrillas could train and escape to when pressured by the Greek Army. The Soviets provided almost no material support to the insurgents; they were too preoccupied consolidating their gains in Eastern Europe to support the guerrillas in Greece.

The guerrillas made a fatal mistake almost immediately. They attacked small, lightly-defended villages, exterminated the local garrison, and ransacked the villages for food. Through the use of terror they gained tacit assistance even from people who hated them. They also resorted to abducting children. During the course of the war, it was estimated the guerrillas abducted between 25,000 and 30,000 children in an effort to get people to support them or follow them as they retreated across the Northern frontier.³ The peasants in the plains villages viewed the guerrillas more as robbers or at best tax collectors, but the people in the hill villages were much more sympathetic toward the guerrillas. It was here they had their greatest success recruiting, receiving support, and establishing bases.

The Greek Army during the initial stages of the insurgency was very weak. Actually, the army did not even exist until after the war. By early 1946 the army numbered 75,000 against an insurgent force of approximately 18,000. Therefore, it could not provide the security needed to protect every village subject to attack. The army tried to form mobile reaction forces to respond to attacks, but the poor quality of training and the low skill

level of the average soldier resulted in a very ineffective program. Leadership, training and equipment were all lacking in the Greek army. It was not until March, 1947, when the United States decided to support the Greek government that the outlook became brighter. Congress authorized 150 million dollars of a 400 million request. The United States also sent several hundred military advisors to establish training programs for the army.⁴

With the addition of 300 million dollars in aid the following year, the army was able to expand to 130,000 men, and the National Guard was expanded to 50,000. The army then began to conduct more aggressive and bold sweeps deep into guerrilla territory. Despite the overwhelming superiority of the government forces, the guerrillas were achieving considerable success with a series of raids throughout the latter half of 1947 and the first six months of 1948. However, they paid a price in men. The guerrillas lost 32,000 men in 1948, but they managed to replenish their forces and maintain their strength level with recruits from the mountain villages. Then, in 1949, two major changes occurred that doomed the guerrilla movement. First, Tito closed his borders to the guerrillas. No longer could they escape Government troops by crossing the border into Yugoslavia. Without this safe haven the insurgents had no place to hide except among the villagers in the mountains. To eliminate this hiding place and cut off the guerrillas' only means of support, General VanFleet, the senior American advisor to the Greek government, recommended a campaign for the systematic removal of whole sections of the population in an effort to separate the

guerrillas from the supporting population. This program of displacing tens of thousands of people was a difficult decision for a democratic country to make, even in wartime.⁵

Several circumstances enabled the Greek government to make the decision for forced resettlement with reasonable assurance of success. First, the border between Greece and Yugoslavia was closed by Tito. Second, Greece now had a relatively competent army of about 200,000 men. This assured security for the people once they were resettled into camps. In addition, the Army was capable of conducting offensive operations while the resettlement program was being implemented. Third, massive aid from the United States, up to a billion dollars, enabled the Greek government to establish and maintain the resettlement camps. By 1949, over 300,000 people were supported in camps by direct U.S. aid. Fourth, the insurgent threat was concentrated in the northern part of the country along the border. Very little guerrilla activity was reported throughout the remainder of the country. Needless to say, this allowed the Greek government to focus on which villages should be resettled. The majority of the population was unaffected; but for those that were, resettlement was swift and uncompromising. Everyone in the hill villages was taken and resettled in or near a plains village. Plans were formulated to provide the basic needs for the villagers, but there was no long range program like land reform which would allow the move to be permanent.

The systematic removal of whole sections of the population had an immediate and positive impact. The central and southern

parts of Greece were cleared with amazing speed. Once the people were removed, it prevented the back infiltration that had plagued Government forces for so long, nullifying their sweeps. Once squeezed out from among the people, the guerrillas could not get back in again and began to break up in smaller groups. The Greek army began major offensive sweeps supported by fighter aircraft and artillery against the guerrillas who could no longer hide.⁶

So successful was the forced resettlement program from a military standpoint that within six months after it was implemented, the guerrillas suffered several major defeats. Finally, in late 1949, they sued for peace.

Author and historian Edgar O'Ballance made the following statement on forced resettlement:

This was more far-reaching than is generally realized. It removed the people; it demarcated a "front line," it prevented "back infiltration" and it caused a blanket of silence to descend. The harsh policy was a difficult decision for the Greek Government to take. The Greek Government hesitated for a long time. However, once this policy was put into effect it paid handsome dividends.⁷

At the conclusion of hostilities in early 1950, the most urgent problem facing the Greek Government was to get the refugees back to their villages. The reason was twofold, social and financial. No less than 50 million dollars, or 22 percent of all Government expenditures, had been consigned to relief in the last year of the war. As a general rule, everyone was required to return to his former home, whether or not he wished to do so. Some officials questioned the wisdom of repopulating some of the hill villages, not because they had supported the guerrillas, but

because the local resources were totally inadequate to support the number of people who had lived there prior to the war. In 1950, the choice was between sending the people back or continuing a prohibitively expensive relief program that the Greek Government could not afford.

The returning villagers were given considerable help in re-establishing themselves. Relief payments were continued for a time. Schools, churches and water supplies were built or repaired, using local labor. Grants of material to repair houses were provided to the people, and in some cases even livestock and tools. By the middle of 1950, all the refugees and villagers that had been resettled had returned to their original villages. A year later all relief programs designed to help them resettle were ended.⁸

The Greek Government was successful in defeating the Communist insurgents between 1946-1949. Forced resettlement of the entire population out of the threatened area was a key factor. The program was successful because it was one part of an overall strategic plan, not the strategic plan itself. There are several factors that contributed to its success. First, the guerrillas were primarily concentrated in one specific region of the country. Therefore, the villages to be removed were easily identifiable. Second, massive U.S. aid over the course of the war, enabled the Greeks to afford the relief programs designed to house and feed those "evacuated." Third, the borders were closed, cutting the guerrillas off from their bases and outside support, thus forcing them to stage, train and subsist within the

borders of Greece. Fourth, the Government did not initiate the resettlement program until it had an effective military force, a militia that could defend the people and an army capable of continuous pursuit. Fifth, the resettlement program was of short duration, only 6-7 months. The short time period did not allow the guerrillas to counter the program with propaganda or military action.

The systematic removal of entire villages from the vicinity of guerrilla-controlled areas did deprive the insurgents of their source of food and information, plus it created a "no man's land" which allowed the Army to use massive fire power. This tactic had its drawbacks, but it was used with caution. A prolonged concentration of people in the "evacuee camps" could have produced an explosive situation which might have played right into the hands of Communist agitators. In Greece it was effective because it was applied at a decisive moment and for a relatively short time.'

Algeria

The Algerian war was instigated and carried out by a comparatively small number of rebels. It began in 1954 with discontent over France's rule and exploitation of Algeria. The initial organizers had fought in French units during the Second World War and in Indochina, but on their arrival back home they became much more aware of the double standard and how the French were exploiting the Algerian people.

The war never assumed the character of a popular uprising. With the exception of certain urban and rural labor centers, the Moslem masses appeared almost apathetic toward both the war and the rebel political objectives. Many prominent Moslem leaders actually opposed the rebellion and paid with their lives. By the end of 1957, 5,576 Moslems were killed by the rebels and 5,480 were kidnapped or wounded. Such terrorist tactics would hardly seem necessary if the insurgents had universal support of the masses that the rebels claimed.¹⁰

The strength of the insurgents grew rapidly from a mere handful in 1953-1954 to approximately 30,000 by 1956, 15,000 in the country and one half outside the country in Morocco and Tunisia. The numbers changed a little, more in composition than in size, to 15,000 uniformed regulars and 20,000 auxiliaries by 1960.

Government forces were totally inadequate during the initial stages, and consequently the rebellion spread and the size of the rebel force grew quickly. Only 50,000 soldiers, militia and police were available in 1954. This number grew to half a million men by 1956. Most of these were trained, combat-experienced French units and legionnaires. Indigenous militia forces were also expanded during this time to well over 100,000.¹¹

The French resorted to forced resettlement, or "regroupment" as they called it, much earlier in the war than had Greece. There were two reasons for this. First, the French brought in trained, combat-experienced troops, so they did not need to wait

while they formed and trained an army. Second, the French had experience with large scale "regroupment" programs in Indochina.

Ironically, forced resettlement was not used successfully in Vietnam and played into the hands of the guerrillas because the people were very much tied to their villages and there was little arable land in the section of the country where they wanted to employ this tactic. However, mass resettlement of rural populations (about 600,000) in Cambodia was successful, due primarily to greater availability of arable land and the less emphatic territorial association of the Cambodians so long as their village communities were kept reasonably intact. The uprooted people were resettled in stockaded villages, rectangular in shape. Due to the rectangular layout, the technique became known as "quadrillage" (gridding). The same tactic would be applied successfully in Algeria a few years later, only "quadrillage" would come to mean a sphere of influence or authority and not just a defended village.¹²

Due to their positive experience in Cambodia, the French initiated regroupment programs early in the Algerian conflict. By the end of 1957, 485,000 people had been moved to regroupment centers. As the war expanded this number grew to two million. These regroupment centers are not to be confused with internment camps. The French established many internment camps, but these were for political prisoners and guerrillas captured in battle. Conditions in these camps were more severe and oppressive than in the regroupment centers.¹³

The French situation and program differed from the Greeks in two primary ways. First, the insurgents were much more widespread than in Greece. They were very active in the major cities and work centers. Even though they concentrated in the hill country where their bases and training camps were, they conducted operations throughout the country. Second and most important, the French had an administrative organization designed specifically to organize and run these camps, the "Sections Administratives Specialisee" (SAS), followed later by the "Sections Administratives Urbaines" (SAU) for urban areas. The SAS officers, usually lieutenants or captains, dealt with every conceivable aspect of administration from teaching, improving agricultural methods and health to administering justice. They were commanded by a general officer who was a trained native affairs officer; therefore, they were independent of the local military commander. The system had its drawbacks. Due to the rapid expansion of the regroupment program, SAS officers stepped into their jobs after hasty training. Further, few spoke any of the Algerian dialects and were, therefore, entirely dependent on interpreters. Second, SAS officers could not afford to specialize in construction or agriculture--they had to know something about everything.¹⁴

The SAS officers and programs on a whole were successful. How well a village progressed depended on the organizational skill of its SAS officers. Many villagers built schools and had good agricultural and sanitation programs and, above all, an effective local militia raised and trained by the SAS officer.

The SAS officers were able to win rural support by offering very real improvements in the villagers' living conditions, coupled with adequate security. All the rebels had to offer was terrorism. This type of comprehensive social, economic and security program is essential for the success of a resettlement program. Just having administrators is not enough, as I will point out later; they must be dedicated to the people and their welfare or the system will not stay together.¹⁵

In rural areas French troops would gather the people from scattered villages and hamlets, focusing on the more remote and threatened areas first. French soldiers initially protected these regroupment camps and farm areas. They lived with the inhabitants, and the troops built defenses of barbed wire, pillboxes and watch towers. They recruited the inhabitants into "harkis" (self-defense units) under the control of the local SAS officers. Identification cards were issued which entitled the holder to subsistence allowances, medical treatment and schools.¹⁶

Forced resettlement gained momentum as the war progressed. By 1959, as stated, over two million people were in regroupment centers. In France a growing resistance to the program caused the Delegate General to require permission before any new camps were started. This order was generally ignored. Camps were being constructed at such a rapid pace, conditions began to deteriorate and rumors of overcrowding and unsanitary conditions began to circulate. Regroupment was strongly criticized by various observers. Jules Roy wrote:

The army has determined to make the zone where rebels were hard to control into an empty area of misery. It has evacuated the inhabitants and razed the houses, so that the P.L.N. can find no refuge there. This is the reason for those pathetic regroupings of population around the cities or towns, those clusters of sheet-metal shacks. In all of Algeria, it is estimated that a million and a half, men, women, and children have been torn from their homes by force of their own fear, and are leading a terrible displaced life somewhere else.¹⁷

Roy also conceded that regroupment and the S.A.S. dealt a crippling blow to the guerrillas. This fueled the flames of political unrest in France against the war. It was becoming too costly in lives, 26,000 troops killed, and money, almost 500 million a year; and there appeared to be no end in sight.

By 1960, morale among the insurgents was very low. They felt isolated and cut off from the people. Their casualties were high and support, especially from outside the country, was drying up. Since the Army could not isolate the insurgents from the urban areas as it did in the rural areas, the insurgency continued to fester and the guerrillas never had to surrender.

The French withdrew from Algeria in early 1960 because of political and financial reasons, which proves insurgents do not need a military victory to achieve their goal.

Forced resettlement was generally successful in Algeria. It achieved its goal of isolating the insurgents from the people in the rural or remote areas. The French had used this policy successfully before. Their organization and planning was better than the Greeks' but far from perfect. The SAS organization is critical for any hope of long-term success. Once again the program was extremely expensive, it grew too rapidly and

consequently conditions deteriorated and many people fled to the city. In Greece the people supported the government. In Algeria the people were not self-ruling, and when the French government became tired and unsupportive of the war, France relinquished its colony. Algeria highlights the fact that resettlement is not an end in itself, only a tactic in an overall strategy. The French were unable or unwilling to make the political reforms which may have eliminated the main force behind the insurgent movement.

Malaya

The Malayan insurgency lasted officially from June, 1948, to July, 1960, the dates of the state of emergency. In fact the military threat had been contained and was on the decline by 1954.

The seeds for the guerrilla movement were actually sown during World War II when the British led a group of 200 Chinese Communists behind Japanese lines to harass the enemy. This force grew to 3,000 by the end of the war. The British supplied food, clothing and weapons, so by August, 1945, the future insurgents were well supplied and armed.

Almost 100% of the guerrillas were Chinese, who comprised 38% of the population of Malaya but were treated as second-class citizens. They in fact had to meet special conditions to become citizens. The Chinese were also inspired by the Communist movement in China and from 1945-1948 attempted to gain maximum political power by creating economic and civil disruption in large towns. In 1947 alone they organized over 300 strikes. The

British countered with several restrictions on union activity. The guerrillas then decided to concentrate their activities among the rural Chinese, a particularly underprivileged community living on the fringes of the jungle as squatters.¹⁹ Of the one million Chinese, half made a living growing crops and the other worked as laborers in the rubber plantations or in tin mines. The squatters had settled on the jungle fringes, after an economic slump in the late 1930's when many jobs were lost. The others moved there to escape the harsh and ruthless treatment by the Japanese.²⁰

The strength of the guerrilla forces ranged between 4,000-5,000, and after 1957 their numbers declined significantly.²¹ Government forces initially were about 21,000. This number continually improved until force levels reached 30,000 military, 60,000 police, and 250,000 part-time home guard strength, of which less than 50,000 were on duty and armed at any one time.²² A key factor here or in any insurgency is that Government security forces increase proportionately to the guerrilla forces. This was true in Greece, Algeria, and Malaya. In Vietnam the trend was different.

Between 1945 and 1948, the British instituted a series of programs and policies that greatly restricted the guerrillas' ability to operate freely in the southern part of the country. Police restrictions, check points, curfews and a population that supported the government caused the insurgents to shift their emphasis to the north, among the Chinese squatters. Here they

felt they could gain support. However, this move isolated them, creating a perfect situation for a resettlement program.

The British plan for resettlement was probably the most comprehensive and far-reaching program in its planning and execution that a government ever attempted. A special committee was established in 1948 to examine the squatter problem and recommended a resettlement program. They surveyed the area to determine the number of people and villages involved. In addition, they discovered there were over 40,000 acres under cultivation by squatters. These small farms were supplying vegetables, pigs and poultry to Singapore.²³ An even more difficult task was persuading Malayan rulers to allocate land for the resettlement program. This had to be done by state officials, and there was a general reluctance to do anything at all to encourage the Chinese to become permanent residents in Malaya. Rulers were finally persuaded to support the program. Almost two years of planning went into the resettlement program before it was initiated, and this greatly enhanced the execution phase.

The man most often credited with organizing and carrying out the program was General Harold Briggs. He was appointed as director of operations in 1950 and held the post until he had to resign due to poor health in 1951.²⁴ Briggs was well thought of and was an able administrator, but the system he set up was so well planned and supported by all the governmental agencies that it was able to survive even after his sudden departure.

The new settlements were at first known as "resettlement areas" but later came to be called "New Villages." They were specifically sited with an eye for defense, protected with barbed wire and guarded by a detachment of special constables, until they were able to form their own home guard.²⁵ By 1952, 423,000 Chinese squatters had been resettled in 410 New Villages at a cost of \$41 million. Although a massive undertaking, the British did not rush into the program. It was tested early on, and the reaction of the people was carefully studied so policies could be modified and procedures developed that would provide incentives and reduce apprehension and fear caused by a sudden move.

Noel Barber, in his book War of the Running Dogs, describes in detail the actual procedure to collect the people from a squatter village and move them to a New Village. Several agencies were involved--military, police, civil affairs, and public health officials. Secrecy was essential to success; otherwise, the squatters would have disappeared into the jungle in mass rather than be moved. The operation usually began before dawn. Troops would cordon off an entire village to prevent anyone from escaping. At dawn when the people were getting up, the civil affairs personnel, accompanied by police, would enter the village, gather the people together, and explain what was going to take place. Naturally emotion ran high. Some villagers tried to escape, others would just refuse to cooperate. The Chinese civil affairs officer would explain all the benefits of the New Village: water, medical facilities, schools, and some even had electricity. As an extra incentive he announced that

plots at the New Village would be allocated on first-come, first-served basis. Those that signed up first would have first choice where their house would be constructed. Additional incentives were temporary occupation licenses both for their houses and agricultural small holdings, which greatly increased their feeling of security, bearing in mind that they had previously had no legal title whatever to their land. Villagers were given a short period of time to pack their belongings, and each family was allocated one truck on which to load as much as it could, to include livestock.²⁶ Police screened the villagers and issued identification cards to each individual. Once loaded the trucks convoyed to the New Villages. The New Village was just a fenced-in open space. Each plot, roughly the size of two tennis courts, was staked out and marked. Each family was given free material and helped to build a new house. A doctor gave every villager a medical examination, and each family received a government subsidy for up to six months until they could reap the first harvest.²⁷ Each New Village had a Resettlement Officer assigned. These government officials, either Chinese or British, lived in the village and were like the French SAS, responsible for all the administration and coordination of protection for the camp. An important factor here was that they were not charged with "unpopular" duties such as collecting taxes, registering young men for conscription or making overt reports of people's movements. These officials did their best to alleviate the hardships of the people and make the village as pleasant as

possible. Consequently, the guerrillas knew that destruction of these new village facilities would be unpopular.

The Communist guerrillas immediately saw the danger of the resettlement scheme and carried out a violent campaign of propaganda, terrorism and intimidation against it. Squatters were told they were going to concentration camps, that they must refuse to move from plots of land on which they had lived for years. Guerrillas tried to delay the move by ambushing convoys, or they would fire into the New Villages at night to scare the people. Despite all this, no New Villages had to be evacuated.²⁸

The life of the village was very controlled--barbed wire fence surrounded it, gates were guarded 24 hours a day, and everyone was registered with the resettlement officer. No one left or entered the village without being checked. The most important aspect of the entire program, and one the guerrillas never fully realized, was that the land these peasants were now putting up their houses on was "theirs." For hundreds of thousands of peasants all over the country who believed the old Chinese proverb, "A land title is the hoop that holds the barrel together," this was the fulfillment of a dream: to have a plot of land which a man could pass to his sons when he died.²⁹

Protection was a vital element of resettlement. The squatters were not moved into a New Village until a police post could be provided. General Briggs made a statement early in the planning phase: "The people matter--they are vital--but you can't expect any support from people you can't protect."³⁰ This ability to protect the people would play a major role in the

Vietnam resettlement program. Three other aspects of the overall protection plan are worth mentioning. First is the formation of a "home guard." After the village was established and all the occupants registered and crops in, the police force along with the resettlement officer would recruit and train a home guard from the local villagers. At first there was some resistance about arming the home guard, but over time those officials that objected were convinced by the resettlement officers and police in the villages that the people could be trusted and it was in the best interest of the program if the people protected themselves. The key to the program was that the members of the home guard were parttime volunteers. They would take turns augmenting the police force, guarding the gates and patrolling the perimeter at night. Since they were parttime, they still could work their fields the majority of the time.

(Unfortunately, this policy was not applied in Vietnam.)

Eventually as the area became more secure and the home guard more proficient, the police were withdrawn and the home guard took over complete responsibility for their own security. By 1956, there were 250,000 home guards, but only 50,000 were armed and on duty at any one time.

The second aspect of security was the Special Branch officers. These officers would recruit agents or detectives and place at least two of these (both Chinese) in each New Village. Their mission was to set up an intelligence network and ferret out any possible Communist infrastructure personnel that may have been with the villagers when they were moved or those that might

try to infiltrate into the village. These detectives lived and worked fulltime within the village.³¹

The third aspect of the overall security program, not as visible to the villagers, was the aggressive and extensive military operations being carried out. As the villagers (squatters) were moved out of an area, the military moved in. Operating in platoon-size patrols, the military continually harassed the guerrillas and kept constant pressure on them so they could not spend their time planning attacks on villages. The military would establish ambushes around high-risk New Villages and attack guerrillas as they approached at night. Villages were attacked, some penetrated, and people were killed; but no village was ever lost to the guerrillas.

The Briggs Plan served to create and preserve a gulf between the guerrillas and the people. This plan had four basic aims:

- (1) To dominate the populated areas and to build up a feeling of complete security which would in time result in a steady and increasing flow of information from all sources.
- (2) To break the Communist organization within the populated areas.
- (3) To isolate the guerrillas from the food and supply organizations in the populated areas.
- (4) To destroy the guerrillas by forcing them to attack security forces on their own ground.

By the end of 1953, over 500,000 squatters had been moved away from the edge of the jungle and relocated in 600 new communities.³²

In July 1960, the state of emergency was terminated and the war officially ended. There were several key characteristics and principles that should be analyzed when reviewing the Malayan resettlement program and the environment under which it was carried out. First, 99% of the insurgents were ethnic Chinese, which comprised 38% of the population. Although a guerrilla per se could not be recognized, the Malay majority of the population had very little sympathy for the insurgents and could therefore be above suspicion. By 1948, the insurgents, as in Greece, were concentrated primarily in one section of the country, the jungle area. This naturally enabled the British to focus their efforts without disturbing the remainder of the population. Although the guerrillas were inspired by the Communist takeover in China, they received very little outside support, which forced them to rely even more on the local population. Consequently, their numbers rarely exceeded 5,000 and usually remained between 3,000 and 5,000 throughout the war. Second, the resettlement plan was well thought out and planned in detail. Even more important, the program was not attempted in isolation. As in Greece, it was just part of a strategy: resettlement of the people, offensive military operations, food control, land reform, and later political reform. Being a compulsory measure, resettlement had to be carried out with great tact and discretion unless the squatters were to be rendered hostile and uncooperative. They

had to be made to feel that the change was in their interest. Since the British viewed the program as a long-term and in fact permanent move, villagers were provided land for farming, livestock, construction material, food subsidies, and compensation for losses. Schools, medical care, clean water and other amenities were provided. Most important, there was effective and constant security, first by the police, then a combination Home Guard and police, and finally just Home Guard units. Security is the lynch pin upon which a resettlement program depends. It is the sole reason for the project to begin with.³³

The Malayan resettlement program is heralded as the ultimate success. Maybe the environment under which it was carried out contributed to it, but without a doubt it was well planned and executed and it contributed directly and significantly to the defeat of the guerrillas. As in Greece, the program was extremely expensive; but unlike Greece, the majority of the New Villages are thriving communities today.

Vietnam

The Vietnamese War and insurgency is much more complex and involved than the previous three case studies. Once again, to understand the environment under which forced resettlement was attempted in Vietnam we must take a quick look at the insurgency itself and the causes for it. Unlike the other three case studies, the Vietnam insurgency did not start a year or two before a resettlement program. It went back to the end of World

War II. The Vietminh under command of Ho Chi Minh had fought a relatively successful campaign against the Japanese and had set up an independent government over the northern regions of Vietnam. In fact, American officers had met with Ho Chi Minh and General Giap in China in 1944. At the conclusion of the war the Vietminh extended its claims to all Vietnam. On September 2, 1945, Ho proclaimed the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. That same month General Phillip Gallagher arrived to head the U.S. Mission in Vietnam. General Gallagher supported Vietnamese independence under Ho and opposed the restoration of French colonial rule. On September 20, General Gallagher wrote his superior:

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Ho Chi Minh is an old revolutionist and a political prisoner many times, a product of Moscow, a Communist. He called me up and welcomed us most profusely and he told me that regardless of the decision of the big powers regarding whether France would or would not be permitted to come back in, his party expected to fight, they are armed, well supplied, and will resist all French efforts to take over French Indochina. In this regard it is well to remember that he is a revolutionist whose motto is "Independence or Death."³⁴

Later Newsweek compared Ho Chi Minh to George Washington, and General Gaip publicly celebrated the "particularly intimate relations" which the Vietminh enjoyed with the United States.³⁵

On March 6, 1946, the French and Vietnamese signed an agreement recognizing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as "a free state with its own government, parliament, army and finances." In exchange, Ho agreed to let 15,000 French troops return to Vietnam. That summer when Ho was in Paris to work out

the details of the agreement, the French set up their own puppet government of Cochinchina. Some violent clashes broke out between the French and Vietnamese. Then on November 23, 1946, the French artillery shelled Haiphong and killed 6,000 Vietnamese. A month later the Vietminh cut off water and electricity to Hanoi and attacked. The war for Indochina had begun. The war lasted until 1954 and was fought throughout Vietnam. The French finally withdrew, but the treaty divided the country in half, with free election scheduled to be held in 1956.³⁶

The Indochina War was fought on a grand scale. The Vietminh had progressed through all phases of an insurgent war. The organizational, guerrilla, and finally the war of movement with regimental and even divisional-size units, engaged against the French. When the war ended and the country was divided, these units and the Vietminh organization were not disbanded. Weapons were cached, and they waited for the outcome of the free elections. Ho Chi Minh's goal always was to have one united country.

The French made very little effort while in power to develop a high-level, professional administration among the native Vietnamese. What little had developed was probably located in Hanoi, the capital. Consequently, the South had almost a total void of high-level leadership in banking, the judicial system, economics, and public administration to enable the country to function. Those that were placed in power immediately wanted to

and did copy the French style of living, surrounding themselves with power and luxury.

The peasant population, apathetic to a central government of whatever character, was becoming increasingly alienated as a result of Saigon's failure to supply even their basic needs. Land reform, tax reform and fertilizer programs turned out to be only slogans. The greatest shortcoming was the lack of protection. Even if the other programs were carried out, if the government could not provide security from attack, they were all for nothing.

After the South Vietnamese President, Diem, cancelled the unification election in July 1956, the Communists emerged once again in force. Even with \$1.2 billion in economic and military aid, Diem was unable to stem the tide of violence. By early 1959 the security situation had deteriorated to the point that Diem felt it necessary to establish drumhead courts with authority to sentence to death not only terrorists and members of subversive organizations, but speculators and "rumor spreaders."³⁷ In an effort to give the peasants some measure of security and at the same time tighten government control over them, forced resettlement was considered. The driving force behind resettlement was President Diem's brother Nhu. He had visited Kuala Lumpur and heard about the New Village programs and the success the Malayan government was having with them. Nhu was convinced the program would work in Vietnam.

Out of the Malayan example were born, in the middle of 1959, the "Closer Settlement Areas" or Agrovilles, a term borrowed from

French pacification in Tonkin. Province chiefs were instructed to round up unreliable families. Within a few months 43,000 were settled on 23 resettlement estates marked out on former French concessions. These removals did at least have the effect of transferring to the Government some of the taxes that in the immediately preceding years had been extracted by the Vietcong. The scheme had several flaws and inevitably petered out. Very little planning and no coordination between Government agencies went into the program. All Government departments worked in isolation and did their jobs no more efficiently on the Agrovinces than anywhere else. Once again security measures failed and peasants were subject to harassment and threats by the Vietcong. So eventually the Agroville idea was abandoned and Nhu even denied approving the plan in the first place. However, out of this program came the idea of the "strategic hamlets."³⁸

The concept of isolating the peasants from the guerrilla bands who preyed on them was an old one in Vietnam. Defended villages had existed for centuries. Many people lived in stockaded villages, particularly along the border, to protect themselves from bandits and border raiders. The name "strategic hamlet" seems to have been used first in the summer of 1961 in Vinh Long province. The program was started in earnest in 1962. It was estimated that about 11,000 strategic and defended hamlets would be required, of which 50% would require only minor regrouping.³⁹

As in everything involving Diem, the United States found it difficult to work with him. The United States preferred a

reorganization of the Army command structure, giving the field commander more flexibility. Diem believed this would threaten his control over the army, so he brought in Robert Thompson, the prestigious British expert, who formulated a plan that emphasized state defense and government control over the people.⁴⁰ Diem wanted quick results and mobilized his entire army to create the strategic hamlets by force. Sir Robert Thompson' book, Defeating Communist Insurgency, gives a detailed account. Peasants were ordered to abandon their homes and lands. Cash and materials allocated to build new homes were inadequate, and villagers were compelled to give their labor to build stockade and defense installations. Some government officials saw this as a good time to loot, collect back taxes and reinstall landlords.

As a result of his haste, the program became over-extended with no strategic direction. The coordination within each province was extremely superficial, and non-existent between provinces. A sort of competition emerged between province chiefs to see who could create the most strategic hamlets. The Army gave the program only half-hearted support. A battalion would be allocated to clear an area and after a couple of weeks it was withdrawn with only a paramilitary force to face the brunt of the Viet Cong reaction.

Diem wanted the entire program, 11,000 strategic hamlets, completed in 14 months. The following schedule indicates he came close to his goal, but in the process he created chaos. All forms of administration collapsed, security plans were non-existent, and supplies for defensive material ran out.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Monthly increase</u>
	<u>completed hamlets</u>	
July 1962	2,559	--
August 1962	2,661	102
September 1962	3,089	428
October 1962	3,225	136
November 1962	3,550	325
December 1962	4,080	530
January 1963	4,441	361
February 1963	5,049	608
March 1963	5,332	283
April 1963	5,787	455
May 1963	6,226	439
June 1963	6,872	646
July 1963	7,220	348
August 1963	8,095	875 ⁺¹

The strategic hamlet program provided an excellent propaganda tool for the Viet Cong. Villagers were warned about impending moves, allowing young men to slip away and join the VC. Anyone who refused to go was considered an outlaw and was subject to attack by artillery or aircraft. The Vietnamese government clearly underestimated how deep the VC infrastructure was integrated into the population. Consequently when a village was moved, so was the infrastructure. When attacked, sympathizers within the hamlet simply opened the front gate to the enemy.

At the beginning of 1963 the Viet Cong gave the highest priority to the destruction of the strategic hamlets. Since its

sympathizers were among the people, and paramilitary or quasisecurity forces lacked equipment and training, the Viet Cong offensive was a stunning success. Operating in up-to-battalion-size units, the Viet Cong dismantled 2,500 hamlets, the entire population of which were now outlaws in the eyes of the Government and subject to attack. They damaged another 1,000 and planted their influence more deeply in many of the remaining 2,500. Although Diem claimed that 8,500 hamlets were under his firm control, Washington was skeptical. With Diem's death the hamlet program fell into abeyance, despite several attempts to revive it in various forms. Finally in February, 1966, comparable efforts to control the rural population ceased to interest the United States or any of the Saigon governments.⁴²

The strategic hamlet program was from its inception a total failure for several reasons. First and foremost, the Saigon government did not have the administrative infrastructure to plan, organize and carry out such a massive undertaking. They never realized the negative impact it would have on the people and how important it was to reduce the trauma by designing a well-thought-out, comprehensive program. They envisioned forced resettlement as an end in itself and not just one part of a strategic plan. Second, a government should never resettle villagers they cannot protect. The army was not well trained, provided half-hearted support, and they were not able to launch a major offensive operation to keep the guerrillas from targeting the hamlets. In Vietnam the security mission was immediately turned over to the weak, poorly-armed militia, whose members were

forced to perform these duties fulltime instead of working their fields. Third, administration officials did not stay in the villages at night--they visited the villages, then retreated to more heavily-defended district capitals. Fourth, enormous quantities of money and supplies were thrown at the program trying to make it work, but the speed and sheer magnitude of the project, hundreds of villages a month, overtaxed the system. Many corrupt officials skimmed much of the supplies off for their own benefit. Finally, the program, for all its faults and failures, did have a powerful negative impact on the guerrillas. Initially recruiting dropped dramatically. The people were freed from the double tax system, VC and government, and removed from battle zones. However, unlike Greece and Malaya, the Viet Cong infrastructure was firmly entrenched throughout the country. They were also beyond the guerrilla stage and could mount major attacks even against regular army units.

CONCLUSION

After reviewing four counterinsurgency operations in recent history, each involving major resettlement programs, a brief analysis of the major differences and similarities may be helpful in drawing a conclusion on the value and utility of resettlement programs in future insurgencies. All counterinsurgency experts agree that one of the fundamental principles to defeating an insurgency is isolating the insurgents from the general population. It has been said an insurgent is like a fish out of water when he lacks the people to provide recruits, food and

intelligence. However, isolating the people does not necessarily mean forced resettlement. That is the harshest and most drastic method but probably the most effective. Legal aspects of forced resettlement are currently addressed in Protocol II, Part IV, Article 17 of the Geneva Convention, which states:

The displacement of the civilian population shall not be ordered for reasons related to the conflict unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative military reasons so demand. Should such displacement have to be carried out, all possible measures shall be taken in order that civilian population may be received under satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition.⁴³

This article was specifically added to address internal conflicts within a country, i.e., 'insurgency. Article 49 of Protocol I of the convention only addressed the treatment of civilians when a conflict existed between the countries. Article 17 of Protocol II was focused primarily against the unnecessary coerced displacement of civilian population in non-international armed conflict.

Seven primary factors contributed to the success or failure of the resettlement programs I reviewed. They were: the maturity of the insurgent movement; regional concentration of guerrillas; the size of the insurgent force; cost; the skill of security forces; administrative skill of the host government; and popular support of the government.

1. Maturity of the Insurgent Movement.

In Greece, Malaya and Algeria, the insurgent movement had a very distinct beginning that almost coincided with the initiation of counterinsurgency operations. This meant the government

developed strategies, collected intelligence and conducted operations while the insurgents were in their organizational stages of development. However, in Vietnam, the Viet Cong had an eight-year headstart on the South Vietnamese government. The Viet Cong infrastructure permeated the country, and guerrillas were already operating at battalion level while the Vietnamese army was still being formed and trained. Could the Vietnamese government have overcome this tremendous disadvantage? Possibly, but it would have been much more difficult than the situation faced by the other three governments. Due to its complexity, a resettlement program should have been low on their priority list.

2. Regional Concentration

Obviously, it is a great advantage for the government when the insurgents are concentrated in one particular geographic region of the country, as in Greece and Malaya. Forced resettlement will have a greater and quicker impact when the guerrillas are regionally concentrated outside of urban areas. In Algeria the French were successful in isolating the insurgents from their staging bases and training areas but were unable to clear them completely from the urban centers. This is a major limitation of resettlement programs: little or no impact on urban areas. In fact, it may complicate matters because often villagers who do not want to be resettled will flee to the cities. The Vietnamese government overreacted. Since the guerrillas were not concentrated in any one area, they attempted to defend every hamlet. A more selective approach, based on threat or location, would have been more effective.

3. Size of Insurgent Force

The overall size of the insurgent force had little bearing on whether or not to relocate villages. How the program was planned and carried out, though, directly impacted on the size of the insurgent forces. As effective resettlement programs took hold, the size of insurgent forces tended to remain the same, as in Greece and Algeria, or shrink as in Malaya. In the ineffective Vietnamese program, the reverse happened; the size of the guerrilla force increased fivefold. Forced resettlement appears to be a win-lose proposition. Properly planned and conducted, the government gains the people's support, but an ineffective program alienates the population and drives them to the insurgents.

4. Cost

Every resettlement program was extremely expensive in construction material, land, compensation, subsidies and security. In each case outside governments supported the programs entirely or heavily subsidized it. More than likely it will be impossible for a developing nation to even consider a resettlement program without the financial backing of an outside government. The cost is proportional to the size and extent of the operation, but unless the resources are dedicated to the program so that the people are made to feel better off than they were, the consequences are devastating. The Vietnamese government cut corners and failed to provide construction material, subsidies, land and protection. So the people, in many

cases, were worse off and their loyalty switched to the other side.

5. Security

Possibly the most important aspect of resettlement is the ability to protect the people. In every insurgency once the guerrillas realized what was happening, they targeted the "New Villages." If the government cannot protect the people, it should not make targets out of them. In the first three case studies, resettlement was not attempted until security forces, army and police, were effective forces. Then once the villagers were moved, continuous offensive combat operations began in the area. This put the guerrillas on the defense and prevented them from planning operations against the resettlement centers. The Vietnamese army was not effective, it had little interest in resettlement, and its offensive operations were not part of a coordinated plan to keep the guerrillas away from the strategic hamlets. The result was thousands of hamlets lost. How the security program is designed is not as important as its effectiveness. Army, police, or militia was never the issue. The form of security must be based on the threat and skill of the defenders. Parttime militia are obviously the most cost effective, but they were no match for battalion-size guerrilla units in Vietnam. Security is a basic need of all humans; and once it is provided and effective, then other benefits, intelligence and cooperation, will follow.

6. Administrative Skill of Host Government

The skill by which the host government planned, carried out and then administered the resettlement operation directly contributed to its success. The Greek government did not appear to have any formal administrative organization to run the resettlement camps, except to provide the basic needs, food and shelter. Fortunately, it was only a temporary program of six months. They quickly realized a potentially dangerous situation existed if the people were confined too long. Once the war was over, a resettlement in reverse occurred and people were strongly encouraged to return to their villages. Several incentives were then provided to restore the villages. Malaya and Algeria were the opposite--the moves were always viewed as permanent. Consequently extensive administrative organizations were designed to deal with the "New Villages" or "Regroupment Centers." These were operated by well-trained Resettlement Officers in Malaya and the SAS in Algeria. Both these programs had clearly stated goals and objectives, and for the most part the people perceived them as working in their best interest and not just the government's. In Vietnam the government was plagued by a lack of administrative skill and talent at all levels. The local administrations lacked the skills, training and dedication to be effective. They did not live in the villages and were also responsible for carrying out unpleasant and irritating duties such as tax collecting and recruiting. Therefore, they were always perceived as just an instrument of the government.

7. Popular Support for the Government in Power

Naturally the goal of any counterinsurgency movement is to gain and maintain the popular support of the general population. In all the cases the majority of the population was either pro-government or neutral. Resettlement has the potential to quickly turn the people anti-government because of its harsh nature. However, if the people are convinced the government will protect them and improve their lifestyle, or if they believe it is only temporary, they will be much more willing to cooperate. In all four case studies the villagers were under varying degrees of pressure by the insurgents for food, information, recruits and taxes. What the villagers did not know was if their life would be any better under government control. It is a one shot deal, and if the government fails to fulfill its promises, the population is lost to the insurgency. Except in Vietnam, the resettlement program met the expectations of the villagers. As a result the government maintained control of the population and the insurgency struggled for survival, or died out in the cases of Malaya and Greece.

Forced resettlement is a viable option because it clearly satisfies one of the fundamental principles of counter-insurgency operations, separating the people from the insurgents. However, it is one of the harshest measures and runs counter to the principles of a democratic society because it so negatively affects the lives of thousands of innocent people. If a country is forced to consider such a program, it should be only after it has exhausted the more traditional methods of subduing an

insurgency. Resettlement must be part of an overall strategy including food control, political reform, and offensive operations. It is not an end in itself and therefore will not succeed on its own. The program must be well planned and administered. The goal is to make the lives of the people better after the move than before. Security is critical--the people should not be moved until they can be protected. Finally, the cost of such a program is exceedingly high. Hundreds of millions of dollars were spent supporting each resettlement effort. Cost must be recognized in advance and resources or financial backing obtained prior to implementing the program.

Forced resettlement is an option a threatened government "should consider, as a high-risk, high-pay-off strategy that, if successful, often proves fatal for the insurgents. If it fails, so will the government.

ENDNOTES

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3. Stephanos Zotos, Greece, the Struggle for Freedom, p. 170.
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8. William McNeill, Greece, American Aid in Action, 1947-1956, pp. 48-49.
9. George Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat, p. 259.
10. John McGuen, Protracted Revolutionary War in Algeria, p. 24.
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17. John McGuen, The Art of Revolutionary War, pp. 332-334.
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26. Noel Barber, War of the Running Dogs, p. 102.

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